Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Region 2 Headquarters
3201 Spurgin Road
Missoula, MT 59804
Phone 406-542-5500

February 20, 2018

Dear Interested Citizen:

Enclosed you will find for your review the Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for a Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) proposal to renew for another 6 years, a Cooperative Habitat Management Agreement with the Blackfoot River Ranch (BRR) that has been successfully implemented between 2006 and 2018. This renewed Agreement would continue to introduce limited cattle grazing by the BRR on approximately 354 acres of historically cultivated land on FWP's Aunt Molly Wildlife Management Area (WMA, in Powell County, NW of Helmville), thus improving fall re-growth and winter forage quality for elk and deer. In exchange, the BRR would adhere to a FWP-prescribed rest-rotation grazing management plan on both FWP pastures and approximately 640 acres of BRR's nearby private native rangeland. These private pastures provide important native elk and deer winter range, and the landowners also allow public fall hunting access to the property.

A draft environmental assessment has been prepared for this proposal, and it may be obtained by mail from Region 2 FWP, 3201 Spurgin Rd., Missoula 59804; by phoning 406-542-5540; by emailing shrose@mt.gov; or by viewing FWP's Internet website http://fwp.mt.gov ("News," then "Public Notices," beginning February 20).

Comments may be made online on the EA webpage or may be directed by mail or email to the addresses above. Comments must be received by FWP no later than March 12, 2018.

As part of the decision-making process under the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA), I expect to issue the Decision Notice for this EA very soon after the end of the comment period. The Montana Fish & Wildlife Commission has the final decision-making authority for FWP land leases, and the Commission will be asked to render its decision on this proposal at its April 9th meeting, currently scheduled to be held in Livingston.

Sincerely,

Randy Arnold
Regional Supervisor

RA/sr